

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-82 (cancelled)

Claim 83 (previously presented) A thermally curable system comprising:

- (a) a binder comprising at least one carboxyl-containing polymer;
 - (b) a cross-linking agent comprising at least one epoxy-group-containing compound; and
 - (c) a matting agent comprising:
 - (i) a metal salt or a metal complex of an organic compound, the metal being selected from the group consisting of magnesium, calcium, strontium, barium, zinc, aluminium, tin and antimony;
 - (ii) a polymerisation product of epoxy-group containing monomers, wherein the epoxy value of the polymerisation product is from 1 to 8 equivalents of epoxy groups per kilogram;
- wherein the overall ratio of epoxy equivalents of component (b) to metal equivalents of component (a) is from 0.2 to 120; and
- (iii) optionally, a natural or synthetic wax.

Claim 84 (previously presented) The thermally curable system of claim 83, wherein the carboxyl-containing polymer is a carboxyl-terminated polyester and/or a carboxyl-containing (meth)acrylate polymer.

Claim 85 (previously presented) The thermally curable system of claim 83, wherein the matting agent is present in an amount of up to 20% by weight based on the total weight of binder and cross-linking agent in the system.

Claim 86 (previously presented) The thermally curable system of claim 83, wherein the matting agent is present in an amount of from 1% to 10% by weight based on the total weight of binder and cross-linking agent in the system.

Claim 87 (previously presented) The thermally curable system of claim 83, wherein the cross-linking agent does not contain any glycidyl esters that have a molecular weight of up to and including 1500.

Claim 88 (previously presented) The thermally curable system of claim 83, wherein the epoxy-group containing compound is a mixture of a diglycidyl compound and a triglycidyl compound.

Claim 89 (previously presented) The thermally curable system of claim 88, wherein the carboxyl-containing polymer is a carboxyl-terminated polyester and/or a carboxyl-containing (meth)acrylate polymer.

Claim 90 (previously presented) The thermally curable system of claim 88, wherein the diglycidyl compound and triglycidyl compound are present in a ratio by weight of from 10:1 to 1:10.

Claim 91 (previously presented) A thermally curable system, comprising:

- (a) a binder comprising at least one carboxyl-containing polymer;
- (b) a cross-linking agent comprising at least one epoxy-group-containing compound; and
- (c) a matting agent comprising:
 - (i) a metal salt or a metal complex of an organic compound, the metal being selected from the group consisting of magnesium, calcium, strontium, barium, zinc, aluminium, tin and antimony;
 - (ii) a polymerisation product of epoxy-group containing monomers, wherein the epoxy value of the polymerisation product is at least 1.5 equivalents of epoxy groups per kilogram; and

wherein the overall ratio of epoxy equivalents of component (b) to metal equivalents of component (a) is at least 3.0; and

(iii) optionally, a natural or synthetic wax.

Claim 92 (previously presented) The thermally curable system of claim 91, wherein the polymerisation product of the matting agent has an epoxy value of from 1.5 to 8 equivalents of epoxy groups per kilogram, and the overall ratio of epoxy equivalents of the polymerisation product to metal equivalents of the metal salt or metal complex is at least 3.5.

Claim 93 (previously presented) The thermally curable system of claim 91 or claim 92, wherein the cross-linking agent comprises a glycidyl ester compound having a molecular weight of up to and including 1500.

Claim 94 (previously presented) The thermally curable system of claim 91 or claim 92, wherein the cross-linking agent consists of glycidyl esters having a molecular weight of up to and including 1500, or contains a predominant amount of such glycidyl esters.

Claim 95 (previously presented) The thermally curable system of claim 91 or claim 92, wherein the epoxy-group-containing compound is a mixture of a diglycidyl compound and a triglycidyl compound.

Claim 96 (previously presented) The thermally curable system of claim 91 or claim 92, wherein the diglycidyl compound and triglycidyl compound are present in a ratio by weight of from 10:1 to 1:10.

Claim 97 (previously presented) The thermally curable system of claim 91 or claim 92, wherein the mixture of a diglycidyl compound and a triglycidyl compound is a mixture of diglycidyl terephthalate and triglycidyl trimellitate.

Claim 98 (previously presented) The thermally curable system of claim 83 or 91, wherein constituent (iii) is present in an amount of from 5% to 30% by weight based on the total weight of the matting agent.

Claim 99 (previously presented) The thermally curable system of claim 83 or 91, wherein constituent (iii) is present in an amount of from 10% to 30% by weight based on the total weight of the matting agent.

Claim 100 (previously presented) The thermally curable system of claim 83 or 91, characterized by the absence of any wax.

Claim 101 (previously presented) A fully cured system according to either of claims 83 or 91.

Claim 102 (previously presented) A process for coating an article, comprising the steps of applying a thermally curable system according to either of claims 83 or 91 to said article, and curing the system at a temperature of at least 100°C.

Claim 103 (previously presented) The process of claim 102, wherein the temperature is in the range from 150°C to 250°C.

Claim 104 (previously presented) A matting agent for thermally curable systems, characterized in that said systems comprise at least one carboxyl-containing polymer as binder and at least one epoxy-group-containing compound as cross-linking agent, wherein said matting agent comprises:

(a) a metal salt or a metal complex of an organic compound, the metal being selected from the group consisting of magnesium, calcium, strontium, barium, zinc, aluminium, tin and antimony; and

(b) a polymerisation product of epoxy-group-containing monomers selected from the group consisting of glycidyl (meth)acrylate homopolymers, glycidyl (meth)acrylate copolymers, and mixtures of such compounds; wherein the epoxy value of the polymerisation product is from

1 to 8 equivalents of epoxy groups per kilogram; and wherein the overall ratio of epoxy equivalents of component (b) to metal equivalents of component (a) is from 0.2 to 120.

Claim 105 (previously presented) A matting agent for thermally curable systems, characterized in that said systems comprise at least one carboxyl-containing polymer as binder and at least one epoxy-group-containing compound as cross-linking agent, wherein said matting agent comprises:

- (a) a metal salt or a metal complex of an organic compound, the metal being selected from the group consisting of magnesium, calcium, strontium, barium, zinc, aluminium, tin and antimony; and
- (b) a polymerisation product of epoxy-group-containing monomers selected from the group consisting of glycidyl (meth)acrylate homopolymers, glycidyl (meth)acrylate copolymers, and mixtures of such compounds; wherein the epoxy value of the polymerisation product is at least 1.5 equivalents of epoxy groups per kilogram; and wherein the overall ratio of epoxy equivalents of component (b) to metal equivalents of component (a) is at least 3.0.

Claim 106 (previously presented) The matting agent of claim 104 or 105, wherein constituent (b) includes one or more polyglycidyl (meth)acrylate polymers or copolymers having an average molecular weight (Mn) in the range from 1,000 to 30,000.

Claim 107 (previously presented) The matting agent of claim 106, wherein the average molecular weight (Mn) is in the range from 2,000 to 15,000.

Claim 108 (previously presented) The matting agent of claim 104, wherein said matting agent is in the form of a solid mixture, constituent (a) is a zinc salt or a zinc complex of an organic compound; constituent (b) is a glycidyl (meth)acrylate polymer or copolymer; and the matting agent optionally comprises a polyolefin wax or a polyethylene wax having a melting point in the range from 50°C to 120°C.

Claim 109 (previously presented) The matting agent of claim 108, wherein the glycidyl (meth)acrylate polymer or copolymer has a molecular weight (Mn) in the range of 2,000 to 15,000.

Claim 110 (previously presented) The matting agent of claim 108, wherein constituent (a) is a zinc salt of mercaptobenzothiazole; constituent (b) is a glycidyl (meth)acrylate polymer or copolymer having a molecular weight (Mn) in the range from 2,000 to 15,000; and further comprising a polyethylene wax having a melting point in the range from 50°C to 120°C.